

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
August 16 & 17, 2005**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on August 16, 2005 in room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair O'Neal, Ed Barnes, Karen Bonaudi, Bob Distler, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner, and Dale Stedman.

**MINUTES APPROVAL**

*It was moved by Commissioner Barnes and seconded by Commissioner Forner to approve meeting minutes for February 15 & 16, 2005. The motion passed unanimously.*

It was noted by Commissioner Ford that he was absent from the February meeting.

Correction made to February meeting minutes to reflect that:

*Bill Greene stated that in 1996 WSF began developing a life cycle based approach to preservation. In 2001, the Office of Financial Management conducted an audit of WSF's life cycle based approach to the current preservation decision making process for capital investment and determined that it was an effective and sound process.*

**TOLLING STUDY UPDATE AND APPROVAL**

Commissioner Ford communicated that the Tolling Study Team has met with the responders to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Comprehensive Tolling Study, and recommends that the contract be awarded to Cambridge Systematics Inc.

Amy Arnis, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Programming and David Forte, Systems Planning Manager, Urban Planning Office, WSDOT explained how the Request For Proposal (RFP) process works and the policy and technical structure of the study. Mr. Forte emphasized that Cambridge Systematics Inc. has a strong understanding of the Commission's intent along with exceptional technical skills.

*It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner O'Neal that Cambridge Systematics Inc. is the apparent successful proposer for the Comprehensive Tolling Study, and that Commissioner Ford and the Commission's Administrator be authorized to negotiate the contract on the Commission's behalf with Cambridge. That the Chairman of the Commission or his designee having full authority to sign and execute the negotiated contract with Cambridge, and further move that the Administrator will have the authority to authorize and disperse payments to the consultants consistent with the terms of the contract executed. The motion passed unanimously.*

*It was moved by Commissioner Stedman and seconded by Commissioner Distler to approve the Draft Interagency Agreement with the Department of Transportation to provide technical assistance to the Commission pertaining to the Comprehensive Tolling Study. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff, WSDOT, alerted the Commission that the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has filed a class action lawsuit resulting from the Port Angeles Graving Dock site. She distributed a summary of the complaint noting that the Department is working with the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's Office on the suit.

Judy Giniger, Director, Public Transportation & Rail Division, WSDOT, explained that SHB 2124 directed the Department to establish the Office of Transit Mobility to aide in the coordination and facilitation of transit services between transit agencies in urban parts of the state to make certain that public transportation is integrated into the whole transportation system.

### **Five Month Project Expenditure Plan**

Amy Arnis, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Programming, WSDOT, provided a snapshot of the 2005 Transportation Package available revenue sources.

John Conrad, Assistant Secretary, Engineering and Regional Operations Division, WSDOT, provided an overview of project estimates for July 2003 through June 2005.

## **RAIL STUDY DISCUSSION**

### **Ports**

Patrick Jones, Executive Director, Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA), expressed that WPPA is supportive of the study and wishes to stay involved as the study moves forward. He explained the mission and purpose of the WPPA, and distributed a handout titled "Marine Cargo Forecasts & Rail Capacity Study" that was prepared for the WPPA and WSDOT by BST Associates.

Jeannie Beckett, Senior Director of Inland Transportation, Port of Tacoma, explained that the Port of Tacoma is a deep water port and what this means to the state. The Port of Tacoma's goal is to be the most efficient and reliable intermodal gateway in North America. The Port's niche is to move the cargo to the mid-west and upper east coast. Seventy percent of the Port's cargo is moved by rail which keeps approximately 14 thousand trucks off of the road weekly. The Port's challenges are growth expectations, who should pay for and truly benefit from the infrastructure. Funding is always an issue.

Jim Toomey, Executive Director, Port of Pasco, explained that business needs access to multiple modes of transportation to get products to market. The export system is breaking down as a result of the lack the ability and cost of getting products to market. Shippers need the assurance of consistent transportation and some form of price certainty. He believes that the Rail Study, if done at a very high level of interest, looking at capacity issues and policy related matters will be successful. Mainline rail should be the focus of the study.

John Fratt, Consultant, Port of Vancouver, shared that the most important things to focus on in the study are capacity and velocity. WPPA's rail study addressed the Columbia River

Gorge issues, but it was also identified that there is very high volumes going out as well as incoming which impacts velocity. He explained that in order to increase velocity trains are longer today than ever, which creates chokepoints and safety issues. He suggested that the state should expedite siting and permitting issues.

### **Shippers**

Various shippers that were unable to attend provided written comments (Weyerhaeuser, Longview Fiber Company, Washington Wheat Commission and the Washington Short Line Rail Association).

Art Scheunemann, Senior Vice President, Business Development, Northwest Container, explained that Northwest Container has been the Pacific Northwest's premier provider of containerized short haul rail transportation services since 1985. Its mission is to continue to expand its presence as a key component of the Pacific Northwest's effort to improve freight mobility by providing intermodal or multimodal transportation options to customers by utilizing rail, truck, and/or barge.

### **Class 1 Railroads**

John Gray, Executive Director, Interline Marketing, emphasized that Union Pacific's primary role is to haul freight. Approximately half of the yearly revenue collected goes back into repairs and maintenance of tracks. Railroad capacity expansion will be costly and will include new sitings, but very little money will be spent in the northwest.

Andrew Johnsen, Director, Government Affairs, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), pointed out that BNSF is committed to being of service as the Rail Study proceeds. He noted that there are clear economic and public policy benefits in learning more about the role capacity plays in the movement of freight in Washington and through the Pacific Northwest. The rail network is part of what connects our economy to the global market place. The Pacific Northwest has the opportunity to seize upon the many trade benefits that come from having a combination of deep-water seaports, a highway system that connects east as well as north and south, direct mainline rail connections to Chicago and other points east and a strong economic center that has the capacity to seize on the manufacturing and economic export opportunities that backfall container traffic creates.

### **Short Line Railroads**

Tim Marshall, General Manager, Columbia Basin Railroad and Central Washington Railroad, expressed that capacity is not really an issue with short lines, but the existing infrastructure and the inflated cost of fuel and steel.

Ron Ernst, Marketing Director, Tacoma Rail, shared that short lines create family wage jobs and provide innovative services. Passenger rail is the future and preservation of rail corridors is incredibly important.

Written comments were provided by the Short Line Rail Association.

## **Cities/Local**

Peter B. Lewis, Mayor, City of Auburn, introduced Dennis Dowdy, Public Works Director, City of Auburn. Mr Dowdy explained that the City of Auburn is a railroad city. Railroads in the region continue to be a vital underpinning of Auburn's economy. As one of the most important, industrial and warehousing areas in the United States the Valley cities understand that the success of Washington ports and railroads supports the Valley's cities success. The Port's continued health depend on the ability to offer their customers dependable, cost effective shipping options, they must also remain competitive with other west coast ports, Canada and the pacific southwest. Ensuring adequate rail capacity for the future is critical to meeting those goals and remaining competitive. This study is the first step of that process.

Jim White, Mayor, City of Kent, shared that cities have been involved in conversation with other cities around the state regarding streamline sales tax. Cities in the valley and industrial communities, have all been negatively impacted by this tax within the last 30 days, and plan to go to the legislature to propose a settlement that talks to current use. Land may have to be rezoned in order to alleviate the cost to the cities.

## **GRAY NOTEBOOK QUARTERLY UPDATE**

John Conrad, Assistant Secretary, Engineering and Regional Operations, WSDOT, provided an overview of current projects, construction highlights and accomplishments.

Amy Arnis, Assistant Director, Strategic Planning & Programming, WSDOT, called the Commission's attention to the revenue changes in the gas tax forecast over a 10-year period noting that it is primarily due to gas price increases. She also discussed other revenue sources and bond sales. She noted that the next version of the Gray Notebook will incorporate a financial plan that shows the partnership account's (similar to the Nickel Account) source movement and changes.

Dan Sunde, Assistant Director, Project Control and Reporting, WSDOT, requested the Commission's approval of a proposed transfer of spending allocation for the quarter ending June 20, 2005.

***It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Stedman to approve the proposed transfer of spending allocation for the quarter ending June 30, 2005. The motion passed unanimously.***

Reema Griffith, Commission Administrator questioned whether or not the Commission has the authority to make the adjustments as it correlates to the legislative authority of the Commission to do so. Mr. Sunde responded that the Commission is within its scope when shifting dollars between biennia as long as the scope of the projects, or associated costs within the financial plan do not become unmanageable by the financial plan.

David Jones, Engineering and Regional Operations, WSDOT, provided a briefing regarding annual contract awards and final costs to engineer's estimates.

Ron Niemi, Facilities Program Manager, WSDOT, provided a briefing regarding the Department's facility condition assessment. He highlighted facility deficiencies and identified the cost estimates to correct those deficiencies.

Katherine Boyd, Transportation Planning Specialist, WSDOT, provided an overview of the Department's benchmarks for safety improvements and pavement structural conditions.

### **UPDATE ON FEDERAL REAUTHORIZATION**

Larry Ehl, Director, Federal Liaison Office, WSDOT, provided an update regarding SAFETEA-LU project funding and earmarks.

### **PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD**

Randy Boss, resident of Gig Harbor shared his concerns regarding the equitability of the tolling study.

Donald Williams, resident of Tacoma shared his concerns regarding the tolling study.

Paul Locke, citizen shared his concerns regarding transit agencies usage of streets and the associated repair costs.

### **WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT – REGIONAL NEEDS AND PRIORITIES**

Thera Black, Senior Planner, Thurston Regional Planning Council, spoke to the Washington Transportation Plan and identifying regional priorities.

Charlie Howard, Transportation Planning Director, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), provided remarks regarding the PSRC's priorities in the Washington Transportation Plan. He emphasized that the linkage between land use and transportation is critical.

### **STATUS REPORT FROM COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Stedman, Lead, WTP Team explained that Commissioners will be scheduled geographically to attend WTP public outreach sessions around the state.

Commissioner Barnes, Rail Study Team member shared that the Rail Study has kicked off with several of the key players already participating.

Commissioner Forner, Lead, Public/Private Partnerships Team (TIPP) shared that the team is looking at TIPP rules and areas that might need consideration.

Commissioner Distler, provide an overview of WSF's vessel configuration and service plan for the year 2030. Once this is determined the focus will be on how we get there from here.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m., on August 17, 2005.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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DICK FORD, Chair

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ELMIRA FORNER, Vice-Chair

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EDWARD BARNES, Member

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No longer a member  
KAREN BONAUDI, Member

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DAN O'NEAL, Member

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ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

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DALE STEDMAN, Member

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DOUGLAS MACDONALD, Ex-Officio Member  
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

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REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

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DATE OF APPROVAL